Leicester, Mass.
July 3. 1868.

Dear friend Webb.

I came from Boston last
eve^g., in an aft^n. of extreme heat, after an absence
of six days, longer than I intended. Among the
letters awaiting my reading, I find yours very interesting note
to my daughter, sketching y^e goings & comings &
seemings (of which Garrison had given me previously
a little acc^t. so far as he knew, - but Washington &c.
were not included,) the reading of wh. I have greatly
enjoyed. Yrs. to me, respecting your daughter's coming
to N England, was sent to me while in Boston by my
wife. The proposition you make, of her getting a
boarding-place in our town, is one in which I find
many difficulties about acting, - all to my great
annoyance. And I hardly know how to set before
you these various difficulties. We have one public
house, - an old building, - but situated in the very
centre & least agreeable part of the principal
village. It is well kept, as to neatness, & a
various & abundant table, but the charges are
unreasonably high, ($10. per week) & the landlord is determined to
sell liquor, law or no law; and we all agree

it wd. be no place for your daughter. – There is a great dearth, & a crying need, of good lodging & boarding-houses in the town. After getting home last eve., Mr. May & I spent considerable time in discussing the various places where your daughter cd. be made at all comfortable, or wh. wd. be suitable to her. We could think of not one, even if obtainable, wh. wd. not be open to ~~objections~~ objections, – and the fact of her being, in any such case, with entire strangers seems to us a very particular one. As an example of the difficulty of finding any tolerable boarding place, – my friend Prof. Atkinson, of the Boston School of Technology, has been trying to get his family placed here for the summer, for several years past; this year he renewed his application, & I set forth to see personally what might be done. Receiving some little encouragement, I advised Mrs Atkinson to come up here, & see for herself. She came & we went to a number of houses. The only arrangement ~~at all~~ possible for her, was to establish herself & children in a house where the owner could give them rooms only, they to walk 3 times a day

to the public-house for their meals — & this, as one of her sons ~~is~~ is in feeble health, she could not engage to do; — & so has was obliged to abandon our town, & has taken quarters, up in N. Hampshire on Lake Winnipiseogee; — & this is only one case in many. The want of a good public-house, for visitors & summer-lodgers, is a standing topic of complaint & regret here, & has been for years.

What we sh^d like — I mean Mrs. May & I, & all my family — w^d be to ask Deborah to come & make home with us. We are debarred from this by many considerations, wh. prevail over us & against us. My wife's poor health is but one of these; & this objection may be, & we hope will be, entirely removed; for we think she will soon be better. But we are very short-handed in our domestic force; & after long trying for better, have quite come to the conclusion that, for this summer at least, we are not likely to find them. We depend on you as a visitor & guest, and upon Mary Esther. Not to have you, both,

would be to mar all the past memories of my Antislavery life, and to sadden all the future; these visits we cannot give up, & we are looking forward with great eagerness to them. And, I am thinking, that after the whirl of meetings, & sight seeing, - City after city, - &c. it may prove a welcome rest to you to get among our green hills, & into the quiet of our home. Miss Esther fixes no time for coming into New England. I suppose her to be with S. J. M., at Syracuse, now. Nor do we know when to look for you. And you do not say how we can address a letter to you, - save that, in your letter to Ade., you say "I go hence to Deborah in Ohio; My future movements uncertain." - So I write this to Mr. Sulis's care; & shall hope soon to hear from you or from your daughter or both. We are eager to be of service to her in any way we can, & sh^d. rejoice to welcome her to Leicester, into any suitable family. We have always hoped she would make us a visit, either while you were with us, or at any more convenient time, and we still hope she will. We can think of nothing more suitable, in case you decide it is not safe for her to continue much longer in Ohio, - or which point you will be able to judge definitely from your own inquiry & observation on the spot, - than for you to

MS. B.1.6 v.10-p.56

bring her with you to Leicester. We shall welcome ~~you~~ her, with you, to our house, & will do all in our power to make it comfortable to her; & while here, you could look about, among our neighbors & over our town, & see if a more permanent home could be procured here, — or in Worcester, perhaps, wh. adjoins us. And, may be, the way will open for her staying with us longer than we now dare to propose. I don't know that you know, that, from the 18th July to 1st August, our family & house are so pre-occupied, and devoted, etc. etc., that we cannot ask any one here, during that time, not even my own mother, — viz. by preparations for amateur theatrical of ~~Under~~ my daughter Ade's planning. It is a scheme of her own, formed in last January, & the corps of performers, (cousins & friends of ours,) who did 2 or 3 little plays very successfully last winter in Dorchester, engaged to come & perform the same here. — The object is to raise a portion of the funds needed for next year's support

Leicester Society

of our Freedmen's Teacher. During ~~that~~ time every room, nook & corner, of our house will be held subservient to that one purpose, & a general state of "topsy-turvy" will, I fear, prevail. But it will be of short continuance. Before the 18th July, & after the 1st of August, we hope to be accessible as usual to our friends. — I have a letter from E. Quincy today, in which she says he has not heard from you since you left Boston; — & that he hopes you will be able to spend a few days with him this month.

I am expecting to remain at home steadily until the 14th — then go to Boston, to attend "Commencement" at Harvard College, Cambridge, on the 15th — attend next day (16th) the "Reception," annually given in Boston, to returned teachers from the Southern Schools for the freedpeople. (both wh. occasions would, I think, be pleasant to you) — & so return home 17th or 18th. Should you be "coming East" before the 14th, you might

stop at Leicester (leaving the Cars at "Worcester City" [not "Junction"] Station) with your daughter, who could remain here some days while we (you & I) proceeded to Boston for the above & other purposes. Then E. D. W. doubtless be expecting you, — i.e. prepared to receive you there.

My wife & daughters (for my youngest came home with me from her school yesterday) join me in kindest regards to you & your daughter. I am glad you have such good accounts from Alfred & Richard.

I have had, heretofore, a little correspondence with Mr. Sulsit, and wish to be kindly remembered by him.

Let me soon hear from you, and I am, Ever truly

Your

Saml. May Jr

Should you be coming on here, — & whenever you do come, — please let me know a little in advance and I shall try to meet you in Worcester.

ms. B.L.L. v.10. p.56